



GREY POWER MARLBOROUGH

Advocating for people 50 +

From our local President

This is my last newsletter report as Grey Power Marlborough President.

We will be electing a new President at our upcoming Annual General Meeting, March 15, and I hope that many of you will be able to attend.

My new role as National President is, to no one's surprise, proving to be a major responsibility and consumer of my time and attention.

However, I will be remaining on our local committee here in Marlborough and will contribute what and when I can; the first being a big thank you and to acknowledge our local committee and office staff for the work they do for all seniors in the Marlborough region.

As part of my new responsibilities, I recently attended a seminar on Winter Wellness for Seniors. The panel included;

- Hon Tracey Martin, Chief Executive, Aged Care Association of

New Zealand

- Sir Ashley Bloomfield, Professor, School of Population Health, University of Auckland, Interim CEO, ESR (Institute for Environmental Science & Research)
- Dr Michael Baker, Professor of Public Health, University of Otago
- Dr Bryan Betty, Chair, General Practice New Zealand (GPNZ)
- James Westbury, Director, Westbury Pharmacy, Board Member New Zealand Pharmacy Guild
- Dr Julianne Bayliss, Medical Director, CSL Seqirus

The information they offered was of great value to our senior sector around winter ailments such as influenza, COVID strains and other infectious ailments especially in the season.

One of the recurring themes was lack of leadership when there are pandemic

type situations. Leaders are there to empower others in their team/s to reach the best practice outcome

In 2024 there were 900 hospital cases of COVID and 300 for influenza in New Zealand so COVID is still alive and kicking.

We were also informed of the following:

- The longer you are infectious from COVID the more likely you will contract Long COVID.
- Vaccinations for COVID only last for 4 months, which is why is imperative for seniors to have six-monthly boosters.
- Influenza vaccinations also last for four months but you only need to have annually to fit in with the winter period.

The speakers and audience all believed a coordinated approach across the health sectors has the best

outcomes rather than silos where information is not shared.

As National president, I can assure you that I am keeping a close eye on further developments on these issues.

In closing, thank you again to everyone here in Marlborough who have helped me along the way in keeping our seniors safe, secure, and well-informed.

Gayle Chambers, March 2025.



Grey Power Marlborough Inc AGM

Saturday 15th March 2025
10.00am

At the Church of Nativity Hall, Alfred Street, Blenheim

All members welcome

Our Constitution has been updated to align with the new Incorporated Societies Act 2022 and its requirements, and will be tabled at the meeting. A copy of this document is available in the office for your perusal.

Online Subscription Renewals

We are trialling a new system with subscription renewals this year. With an eye to the ever-increasing postage costs, we surveyed our online members and a growing number of these members are happy to have more of an online presence. If you pay online and we have your email, your receipt will be emailed to you. Please note: This receipt will be your PROOF OF MEMBERSHIP. There will also be a link to the Discount Book. Should you wish to have an actual membership card and/or a hardcopy version of the Discount Book, these will be available for pick up from the office.

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What does retirement really look like today?

Jane Wrightson, Retirement Commissioner

As the Retirement Commissioner, I'm often asked about the realities of what retirement is like in New Zealand. There tends to be a 'golden assumption' that over 65's today are mortgage-free couples living relatively comfortably on NZ Super, but there has been little research to test whether this is the case. I'm interested in telling a variety of stories about older New Zealanders to make sure policymakers see the reality of people's lives past the easy stereotypes.

Our research with more than 1,450 New Zealanders, 65 or older, reveals that many retirees are doing it tough. Most don't complain and are grateful for NZ Super, but it has revealed that life on the pension alone isn't easy.

The research shows 37% feel their financial situation has worsened over the past two years. The increasing cost-of-living pressures caused 46% of people to reduce their social interactions and activities, 28% to buy less food, and 26% to delay medical treatments. Older people who are renting, have experienced life shocks after 50, or have long-term health conditions have been hit the hardest. These groups typically have fewer financial assets and are less likely to be financially resilient.

It's clear that being mortgage-free provides a significant financial buffer, and those fortunate to have investments or KiwiSaver are nearly twice as likely to feel financially comfortable compared to those without. For some this is a result of hard work, for others a fair amount of luck is also involved. For people on low incomes or completely reliant on NZ Super, the economic changes over the past two years have meant more than just tightening the belt; it's become a matter of day-to-day survival.

People shared with us their struggles with rising rent and the fear of complaining about poor living conditions. This is a reality for

people living alone and trying to make ends meet. Even those on middle incomes are feeling the pinch. While belt-tightening has generally been sufficient, there's growing unease about eroding their nest egg sooner than planned.

These insights provide us with valuable evidence to help identify practical policies and interventions that could lead to better retirement outcomes for New Zealanders. We'll use these to support the 2025 Review of Retirement Income Policies which the Retirement Commission is required to undertake every three years. For this coming review the Government has asked us to conduct further research on topics including KiwiSaver and other savings, emerging trends and how these will play out in New Zealand over the next 25 years, the experiences of women in retirement, and how New Zealand retirement policies compare globally. A final report, with recommendations for policy adjustments, will be published towards the end of 2025.

I'm grateful to those who took part in this research and shared their stories with us. It stands as an important reminder that things are not always as 'golden' as they seem. It's again highlighted how critical NZ Super is for so many, and why it should be viewed as the treasure it is, and not a burden.

It's also a reminder that actively encouraging long-term private saving is a crucial part of the system, to improve living standards in retirement and reduce the need for extra assistance, as many of the current generation of retirees did not benefit from KiwiSaver or an employer super scheme.

As we move forward, it's crucial we continue to listen to our older population, ensuring that they can live their retirement years with dignity and security, and learning from their experiences to help inform the next generation.

Office Snippets

- Thank you to the wonderful speakers and all who attended our recent Seminar "Prioritising Your Health", another successful seminar held in conjunction with Marlborough District Council. Please let us know if you have suggestions for the next one.
- Subscription renewal invoices are on their way out now. If we have your email details, your invoice should arrive soon (and please note the separate article concerning Online Subscriptions). Check your Spam folder if you cannot find the invoice in your Inbox. Posted invoices may take a few days to arrive.
- Please let us know if you do not wish to renew your membership, otherwise you will receive those annoying reminder notices.
- Payments for subscriptions can be made online; our bank details are on the invoice. Please quote your invoice number or membership number in the reference details. Cash and eftpos payments can be made at the office, which will be open as usual, 9am to 1pm Monday to Friday. We are aware that some members find it hard to pay online or to get into the office. If so, please call us at the office and we will do what we can to help.
- Payment (\$10) for the Grey Power Magazine hardcopy is best paid via online banking to the Grey Power Federation bank account 38-9018-0089518-00. We will take the payment on their behalf if you cannot arrange another way to pay.

Use that Discount Book

We have a number of new businesses in the Discount Book. We welcome and appreciate the support from Age Concern, Aotea Electric, Alba Day Spa, Ben Elborough at Tall Poppy Real Estate, Blue Penguin, Green Contracting Cleaning & Gardening, Junkatron moving services, Lyndon Hogg Painting Ltd, Nite Spa Beauty Therapy,

Plumbing Solutions Marlborough, Savvy Restaurant at the Scenic Hotel Marlborough, Senior Chef, Specky's Handyman Services, The Firewood Company, and Volunteer Marlborough. And of course, we continue to love and appreciate the businesses that have supported us for years, and we will mention some of them each month.

Events

- Seniors Expo 2025 will be held at the Marlborough Events Centre, Alfred Street, Blenheim, 9am to 1pm on Tuesday 11 March. Come and find out about recreation activities and groups and health and well-being information for older people in our community.
- Annual Hospice Vehicle Display will be held at Waterlea Racecourse 10am to 2pm on Sunday 9 March. Gold coin donation for entry.
- Empowering Seniors Expo will be held in the Memorial Hall, Kaikoura, 11am to 4pm on Thursday 27 March, for Kaikoura locals.
- Marlborough Grey Power Annual General Meeting – see separate notice re. the AGM.



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